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THE FOURTH
TRICHINOPOLY NON-BRAHMIN CONFERENCE

24—9—1921.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

C. RAMALINGA REDDY, M.A., (Cantab) F.M.U.

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C. RAMALINGA REDDY, M.A., (Cantab) F.M.U.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I THANK you with all my heart for the signal honour you have conferred on me, so soon after I became available for political work, by electing me to the presidentship of this conference, which meets in the metropolis of Southern India. I feel deeply touched by this mark of confidence, and of good will on the part of my non-brahmin brethren, and look forward to an unbroken continuance of the political comradeship thus established.

Our party has the unique distinction of representing national and social democracies with equal emphasis and in perfect union. I venture to doubt if any other party can claim to have so comprehensive a programme, though to judge from the recent resolutions of The Bombay Presidency Liberal League, it would appear that they are a good imitation of us who are the original and genuine article. We stand for social emancipation as well as political, for the swaraj of the masses as contrasted with that of the classes. We wish to build from bottom upwards and if we continue to develop, making the adjustments called forth by changing times and needs, on the lines laid down by our illustrious leaders, Dr. T. M. Nair and Sir P. T. Chetty, there is no fear of being left dangling in the air without support from below at any period of our career.

THE MOPLAH OUTBREAK

We are met together at a time of unusual interest and excitement. The affairs of the country have reached a critical climax, and we are confronted with issues far trancending the party cries of recent years. The other day Mahathma Gandhi—a figure of singular power in contemporary politics, declared that this Presidency was the most afflicted of any in India. I agree but would add that all our afflictions do not come from the Government. It would do no good to refer in detail to the horrors of the Moplah outbreak in Malabar, which are burnt into our memory. The sufferings of our people in those parts, in which a veritable hell seems to have been let loose, have filled us with indescribable sorrow and profoundest sympathy. I deprecate political capital being made out of the madness and misery of our fellow countrymen. Mahathma Gandhi has declared that the Moplahs have gone mad. I doubt if they are the only people in India who have gone mad; and that further whether the raging, tearing propaganda of the Mahathma and his followers did not supply the moon-shine which brought the excitement to a tragic climax. The soil and seed might have been there, but the conclusion is irresistable that the stimulus and atmosphere were supplied by the Khilafat and Non Co-operation movements. True that the authors of these movements did not anticipate the results that followed. They certainly did not intend them. But they must stand convicted of an error of judgment. They ought to have known that they could not attempt to paralyse the Government and yet preserve peace and order. It has been said that this outbreak occurred in the parts to which the congress and Khilafat workers were not allowed free access, as though in these days influence cannot penetrate beyond the sphere of personal touch and face to face talk. I hope that Government will not exercise more force than is absolutely necessary to quell the disturbance and to restore order. I trust that whatever the circumstances and whatever the provocation, no fancy punishments of the type that disgraced the administration of martial law in the Punjab would be resorted to. The evidence so far

available shows that the recognised standards of humanity and civilization have not been departed from by the military and civil authorities. The new martial law order tempers military rigour by civil jurisprudence and I take this opportunity to tender the grateful acknowledgments of the country, to His Excellency the Viceroy for the generous deed by which he has humanised martial law administration in the country. It will be some years before Malabar can recover her economic prosperity. Meanwhile the acute distress now prevalent calls loudly for relief by private bodies as well as Government. The action taken by the Khilafat and Congress parties in this behalf is worthy of commendation and I trust that the appeal made by Mr. Gandhi for special efforts on the part of our Moslem brethren in the relief of the afflicted Hindus will not go unheeded. There have been adverse comments in a section of the Press on the refusal of Government to permit Congress and Khilafat workers to undertake direct relief work and the example of the Bombay Government which availed itself of the services of Gandhi during the Satyagraha riots at Ahmedhabad was recalled as a model and rebuke to the Madras Government. It seems to me that the circumstances of the present case are different and make such utilisation almost impossible for any self-respecting Government. The Satyagraha movement was started as a protest against a single measure, the Rowlatt Act, and was not directed against Government itself. On the other hand the avowed intention of the Non Co-operation movement is to paralyse Government in all its parts and limbs. How a Government could employ the services of people who aim at its own paralysis and prostration passes my comprehension. The splendid support given by the Legislative Assembly to the declaration of Martial law is a happy proof that with increased Self-Government our representatives are showing an increased feeling of responsibility for law and order. The ideal of Self-Government refers to the source of Government, it does not imply that there should be no Government. On the contrary, people have a more direct interest in the maintenance

of law and order under democratic than under the Beaura-cratic form of Government; and unless they display an active, vigorous hostility to disorder, and an invincible feeling for the maintenance of order undeterred by considerations of temporary popularity, they would forfeit their claims to be en-trusted with self governing powers. Power and responsibility for orderly progress cannot be divorced without fatal conse-quences to the state. But excessive repression should be scrupulously avoided, since abuse of power is sure to create wide-spread sympathy with the victims and lead to a strengthening of the revolutionary elements. Terrorism of any kind by an organised Government is less excusable than the atrocities of a mob undisciplined, ignorant, passionate, fanatical. In the interests of Government itself it is neces-sary to appoint a strong and impartial committee, after the fire has been extinguished, to investigate the causes and course of the disturbances and the methods adopted to put them down and enforce order. Allegations to the effect that a political vendetta is being carried on and against the conduct of the District Officers generally are appearing in the press and it will not do to refuse to hold a thorough and impartial investigation, especially, as in recent years, official publications have acquired an unenviable reputation for sacrificing truth to propaganda.

HINDU-MOSLEM UNITY

From the point of view of the internal relations of Indian Society, it has been said by some sections of the Anglo-Indian Press that this has thrown up the hollowness of Hindu-Moslem Unity and the utter futility of all attempts at getting the two communities to work together on a basis of permanent brotherliness. I will not generalise from the Moplah to all Mohamedans. Let it be remembered that Hindu-Moslem Unity is no patent of Mr. Gandhi; that the Non-Brahmin movement from the beginning aimed at embra-cing Mussalmans within its fold and getting them to work in cordial co-operation for our common social and political advancement. It is perfectly true that the Mahathma has

touched the sympathies and captured the imagination of the Mohamedans to a greater extent than any other leader. But with him the basis of union has been an interest which, though Indian in a certain large sense, is in the main trans-Indian. We have the deepest possible sympathy with our Moslem brethren in their passionate concern for the Khilafat. But at the same time I would beg of them to consider whether it is ever possible to base national unity permanently on a super-national interest. India is bound by all the solemnities of neighbourhood and brotherly sympathy to extend her moral support to Turkey. But she can do this effectively only when she has established her unity on the basis of her own national interest and could speak with the voice and power of a people thus united. There is no need to recall the harm done to Hindu-Moslem Unity by the hasty talk of a few over-zealous people in the North who could not be regarded as voicing the firm judgment of the vast majority of Indian-Moslems, about inviting Afghanistan to come to our liberation and such like impossible projects.

There is no place in India for anything except Indianism. Even as the United States, with her power and assured position amongst the nations, cannot tolerate hyphenated Americans, India also cannot countenance citizens who look across the frontier for the motives and objects of their patriotism. The union between the Mohamedans and the Hindus effected by the Non-Brahmin movement on the basis of internal interests must therefore be pronounced to be more real, more practical, substantial and permanent. Though the Moplah disturbances have caused a wound, a deep wound in our body politic, I am confident that it will be healed by the vitality of our nationalism. In any case no people with a reputation for manliness, consistency of aim, perseverance in their endeavour, could accept a present or past failure as the seal of their doom. We the Hindus and the Moslems alike will therefore work, with faith, till an impregnable solidarity is established between us, and also the other creeds in our land.

THE PULIANTHOPE TROUBLES

I will have to make similar observations regarding the unhappy episodes in Madras between caste Hindoos and Moslems on the one side and our misguided Adi-Dravidas on the other. Really is not Indian civilisation in general and Hindu Society in particular paying the penalty for rejecting the unifying policy of Akbar and Buddhism? The illiberal social Karma of our past must be worked out by these sufferings. There is a greater call for patience and forbearance and benevolence beyond measure on the Hindu Society than on any other; and we the inheritors of soul-stirring traditions of Shanti have to prove by our forgiveness that we shall yet conquer and assimilate by love. I think no Adi-Dravida will accuse me of want of good will to his community. What I have achieved so far for the vindication of their rights is my ground for playing the part of a candid friend on this occasion. A cynic might describe a candid friend as one who possesses more candour than friendship. Well I will leave to my Adi-Dravida brethren to judge me as they please. True that all communities have worked for their up-lift; but history will not deny the fact that the special importance they enjoy today in public life and estimation is almost solely due to Dr. Nair and the party he created. Let them not forget the memorable Spur Tank Meeting the source from which their political good fortune has arisen. Let them reflect calmly whether they can gain anything by antagonising the Non-Brahmins and Moslems, who, united, could hold undisputed sway over the destiny of this land. Nothing has grieved me so much as the ease with which our Adi-Dravida brethren have been led or misled into turning against us, who did so much for them. The 'Justice' went perilously near shipwreck with its own party by the magnanimous concern it displayed for the Adi-Dravidas. True that gratitude plays but a small part in public life. In fact gratitude has been well defined as a feeling for favours yet to come; and no state, no Government, no party, no community has a right for eternal subservience on the part of another on the score

of benefits conferred in the past. As social reconstruction and industrial conciliation are important planks in our platform, I expect that there will soon be developments which would reconcile in a happier synthesis some of these antagonisms. I would not be doing my duty if I did not give expression to a feeling entertained in several responsible quarters that the troubles associated with the name of 'Pulianthope' have been caused by certain sinister influences and that the attitude of the officers and police has not been over correct and proper. It would be a sad day if the feeling should get abroad that foreign capital is trying to exploit our social differences for its own profit; and that other influences are trying to supply a lurid commentary to Mr. Montagu's Reforms Act and other democratic developments. To such of us as are trying to bring about an association between East and West, cultural and political, on a footing of equality and mutual respect, a feeling like that, if it grows and extends, will become an insurmountable obstacle and strengthen the irreconcilables.

Surely Malabar and Pulianthope should do something to moderate the political transports of our nationalist friends and make them realise what an amount of preliminary work has yet to be done before we could assume the temper and tone of dictators and indulge in political heroics.

NON CO-OPERATION

This leads me to the subject of Non Co-operation which is engrossing men's minds and has succeeded in creating a new situation of extraordinary potentialities. A movement of this magnitude cannot be dismissed with a sneer or a shrug of the shoulders. It has to be examined carefully, dis-passionately and if possible, with sympathy. It is being led by a man of undoubted genius—a personality which is an honour and asset to the country. He shares in common with us, the honour of having brought down politics from the classes to the masses. Simple in life, serious and sincere in purpose, possessed of a unique power for firing the imagination and

winning the hearts of the people, he exercises even on those who feel bound to deprecate his judgment—a moral attraction little short of invincible. To the credit of his movement must be attributed the following:—

(1) The special impetus given to Hindu-Moslem Unity.

(2) The rousing of the masses from age-long lethargy to a new and stimulating sense of their national rights and duties in a larger measure, whether judged by the numbers influenced or the degree of influence, than has been witnessed before in our oligarchical country.

(3) The spirit of self-reliance, self-help and independence of Government he has infused into our character.

(4) And the fervour of his moral elevation before which secular power, in so far as it is based on brute force, pales, losing its majesty and influence on opinion. There could be no denying the fact that the jail has lost its terrors and poverty its stigma as a result of Ghandhism. Truly it is an "Ism" that he has established even more than practical politics.

(5) The importation in however partial a manner of social considerations into politics. The old congress would have nothing to do with social reform; but today the abolition of untouchability is a part of its creed.

(6) It must not be supposed that Mr. Ghandi's way had not been in some measure prepared for him by previous history. The foundation of the Hindu-Moslem unity had already been laid by the old Congress which had agreed to the principle of communal representation for the Moslems. Without that assured constitutional arrangement the present *entente* would not have been possible. Tilak and other patriots had already robbed the jail of its terrors. But it was left to Mr. Ghandhi to make

it a fashion. He has made politics the serious and absorbing business that it ought to be instead of a vocation pastime for vakils. His frequent and sensational journeys have given to political leadership an unprecedented reality and power. He has consistently acted on the principle that politics is primarily action and not argument. His is the only party that is effectively organised on a national scale. Still the movement is not one that deserves to be supported under present circumstances in the best interests of the country.

CRITICISM OF THE NON CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

1. Mr. Ghandhi demands redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs. So far as the Punjab is concerned the Government have acknowledged the errors and wrongs of their subordinates and have done not a little by way of apology and reparation. It is another matter whether these have been adequate; but in fairness to the Government Mr. Ghandhi should state what exactly his terms are. No good purpose is served by demanding the indefinite and continuing to be dissatisfied as acutely as ever in spite of what Government has done or may do. As regards the Khilafat it cannot be said that the attitude of the British Government has been satisfactory and if it is a fact that the advice of the Government of India was not taken full account of, it will strengthen our aspiration for full Home Rule, when it would not be possible for British Government to treat our point of view with such scant respect. I might be told that it is an international question in the decision of which Great Britain is not all powerful. This is no argument or excuse for the refusal to give diplomatic support to the Indian contention which is what the conduct of Mr. Lloyd George amounts to. England has undoubtedly committed a breach of faith with the Indian Muslems and her word has become debased.

2. Non Co-operation appears to be Mr. Ghandi's usual weapon under any and every provocation. At Ahmedabad he fasted in order to compel the mill owners to concede the demands of labour. Then a variation of passive resistance known as Satyagraha was tried and now we have Non Co-operation which is a more extensive movement. It is impossible for any nation to thrive under a perpetual atmosphere of Non Co-operation and passive resistance and I doubt whether the methods that might have been in place in South Africa are suited to the present conditions of India.

3. Non Co-operation has degenerated from its own high ideal. Originally started as a national movement for the redresss of national wrongs, it is now being resorted to by different localities for the redress of their local grievances. Palnad adopts Non Co-operation as a protest against the grazing tax. Perala and Chirala adopt it because of the imposition of a municipality instead of a union with which they would have been content; and the Non Co-operators give full support to people who for any reason cause trouble to Government. All this is none other than the spirit of anarchy.

4. There could be only one reason why non-violence is insisted upon so strenously and sincerely by its adherents and that is that the natural tendency of their propaganda is to create violence.

5. The avowed object of the movement is to paralyse Government and even to aquire Swaraj. It may be possible to hold up Government but that by itself will not build up Swaraj. Home Rule without home defence is neither possible nor desirable. A strike may ruin an industry but it cannot create one and Non Co-operation is of the nature of a general strike. By too frequent use, both these instruments, which should be resorted to only under extremest necessity, will become blunted and ineffective; and already Non Co-operation seems to be on the decline.

6. The Non Co-operationist Swaraj has not been defined, so far; how it is to maintain itself in the international

struggle for existence is a mystery, which the Non-Co-operator leaves for the future to solve. Like all mystics he has a passion for the dark beyond, the darker the beyond the greater the passion. In a recent interview Mr. Ghandhi is reported to have said that he would convert the Afghan to peace and quiet by the almighty Chirkha! I do not believe that the whirr of the Chirkha will act as a lullaby, and send our neighbours across the frontier to sleep. The only way of keeping foreigners out is by serving them, if and when they do invade our country, with such a hot dish that they will never more hanker after Indian curries. But this requires an army and modern warfare rests on modern economics. The primitive economics of Ghandi can hardly apply to the stress of modern conditions.

7. The mentality and patriotism of the movement seem to be atavistic. It employs, whether it approves or not, ancient superstitions to fortify modern ambitions. The chirkha has a holy mission; the kaddhar is pure and *sacred* ;—wearing foreign cloth is a *sin*. Till I heard the Mahatma recently I had no idea how completely our religion had its location in the tailor's shop. At the time of the partition the Bengalees effected a similar combination of revivalism and modernism, which provoked the contempt of consistent thinkers like Tagore. Such appeals may, for the time being, be very effective but is the price, that of slavery to superstition, worth paying? The Non-brahmins and more especially the lower classes amongst us depend on the progress of rationalism and liberalism for their emancipation and elevation, and they cannot afford to countenance a movement one effect of which will be to rivet the Shastric fetters more firmly round their limbs.

8. Its social policy is again atavistic. It seems to be a supporter of caste system, though, be it said to the credit of the Mahathma, that in his own personal life he does not observe caste and has denounced untouchability. But we have to reckon with the tendency of the movement and not with the precepts of the master. The priests, heads of mutts, and men

of high caste who have flocked to the standard of Non Co-operation have done nothing to lessen the rigour of untouchability. No mutt has issued a declaration on the subject or permitted the untouchable to enter its holy precincts. Untouchability cannot be removed unless the depressed classes are allowed to enter mutts and temples; and then the question will arise where will they be allowed to remain or how far they will be allowed to advance. If the answer is let them be bracketed with the Sudras, the Sudras would like to know why they should give up their privileges while orders higher still continue in the enjoyment of theirs. There is no need to speculate on possible complexities. This appeal of Mr. Gandhi has had very little effect. The all India Congress Committee and the working committees of the congress have not taken it up for operation. In respect of other matters pertaining to caste the attitude of Mr. Ghandhi seems to be one of conservatism or, at the most, neutrality. He has not given his opinion on Mr. Gour's bill for legalising inter-caste marriages. So far as South India is concerned it would be impossible for us to permit social reconstruction to be shelved and put in the back-ground by a nebulous nationalism. Before I approve nationalism in any shape or form, I would enquire if it has a programme of social reform and whether it has done anything practical to promote it.

9. The economics of the movement are equally atavistic. At present it is concerned with boycott of foreign cloth. There is nothing more to be said on the subject of boycott after what Mr. Gokhale said as president of the Benares Congress. His treatment of the subject remains classical though the figure and statistics he relied upon have changed. But the change adds strength to his plea for Swadeshi and against boycott. The import of cotton goods from England is much less to day than what it was then. The number of Indian Mills and the quantity of Indian manufacture have increased. Boycott is unnecessary and undesirable especially as the country now possesses fiscal autonomy. I hope to deal with this subject at greater length on a subsequent

occasion. But meanwhile some obvious absurdities might be noticed. The Mahathma calls upon the merchant to dispose of their goods at once and at the same time and in the same breath exhorts the people not to buy.

As a way out of the contradiction he appeals to both buyers and sellers to consume the foreign goods by setting fire to them. The prophet will not argue on these points and the people have now come to realise that it is no use arguing with the prophet either. I am glad that common sense prevailed in Calcutta and Madras and is beginning to assert itself in Bombay. If the movement could be diverted to the encouragement of home and cottage industries including spinning and weaving and the harnessing of idlenss for increasing the output of yarn cloth etc. in our country, and bringing about a substitution of local for foreign goods, it would deserve to be warmly supported. But the economic warfare on which we are asked to embark will not result in economic welfare, and is sure to cause much dislocation of business and distress. No trade-war has ever succeeded in bringing an enemy to his knees and if swaraj is going to be obtained by the Chirkha one would have to wait for it till the crack of doom. Mr. Gandhi wants to fight machines and factories by the spinning wheel and hand loom. He might as well try to silence modern artillery by flinging flints picked up from some palaeolithic heap.

10. The attitude of this movement towards culture is again atavistic. It prescribes a boycott of Western culture. It seems that Western civilisation has failed because of the great war. The Hindoos, however, continue to be an extraordinary success though we had a Mahabaratta on our own account. Mr. Gandhi forbids us to taste the fruit of the tree of Western Science; and a distinguished follower of his, a poet of whom the country is justly proud, Mrs. Naidu tells the women of Bengal that if enough Kaddar cloth cannot be obtained they should go about clad in leaves as, it seems, our ancestresses used to do. Is not the analogy between this movement and the economics of the garden of Eden complete?

The boycott of schools has failed, and it is no longer regarded as the path way to Swaraj. I am sure that the other boycotts too will be found to be impossible and therefore unnecessary. The way boycott succeeds boycott with Mr. Gandhi's programme is astounding; if the endless scene is to be stopped his movement itself must be boycotted.

11. The Non Co-operator seems to be adverse to the redress of particular grievances or the promotion of particular reforms. He does not want his stock of grievances to be diminished. Nothing particular is to be done till Swaraj as a whole is installed. Workmen's compensation allowance, industrial conciliation, permanent settlement of Land Revenue, separation of executive and judicial functions etc. must be postponed till the advent of the millennium. I am not prepared to sacrifice these large interests affecting the welfare of the masses indefinitely or postpone them by a day. Under Mr. Gandhi's guidance the National Congress has ceased to be the instrument of constructive statesmanship that it was under Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta. Undoubtedly it is now a power for nationalism but a nationalism which is deaf to every cry except its own.

12. In addition to general anarchy it seems to attempt to introduce a legalised variation of it by capturing Local Governments and using them as its agents. In this it is following the example of Sinn Fein in Ireland. If some of our local governments continue to act as blind agents of Non Co-operation and to play pranks with education and other interests after their characteristic manner it would constitute a serious menace to popular interest and lead to civil strife by necessitating a counter revolution.

13. No leader has ever yet ventured to announce the advent of Swaraj with such definiteness as the Mahathma. It is in keeping with his mystic and prophetic nature that he should fix exact dates in a case that obviously is not suited for such treatment. He has not defined his Swaraj and I have a shrewd suspicion that it is a metaphysical boon and not Home Rule as is commonly understood. The people who

ask for bread at his hand are sure to receive a metaphor-Non Co-operation has its roots perhaps in race prejudice or at all events thrives on racial antagonism. But if there is racial antagonism between Indian and Englishman to-day, the responsibility cannot rest entirely on the Indian. What is happening in Kenya throws a lurid light on the sincerity of British imperialism and on our place within its fold. The ideal of a white Empire has for inevitable corollary a separatist Egypt, a separatist India and a separatist Asia. In a country which has not yet attained home rule there is room for an extreme left wing which will fight free from the responsibilities of office and play the part of the untramelled critic until such home rule is obtained. The Ghandhian movement is an extra constitutional power like the Triple alliance in England. It cannot expect to have the support of those who believe in the present reforms and in constitutional methods of achieving dominion status within the Empire which is the goal of Indian ambition. At bottom it is a question of faith. The Non Co-operationist has apparently no faith in England; the constitutionalist has and events must show which of them is right and which wrong. It is a great pity that the Non Co-operation movement should have come at a time when India has entered on a new and more fruitful stage of industrial and political development. It has less justification to day than it had when it was started. But all the same whatever the difficulties it has created, Government would, I think, be acting ill-advisedly if they proceed to employ repressive measures and try to stamp it out by the exercise of force on an extensive scale. Wholesale arrests, deportations and similar acts, however legal, will, human nature being what it is, create a new situation far worse than the existing. As was mentioned by Lord Morley in a famous speech at Arbroth, prior to the outbreak of the Boer war, once the first shot is fired reason disappears and passion takes its place. Government would do well to keep to the present course of calm though watchful mood unless violence occurs. I have no doubt that the common sense of the people would

triumph sooner than anticipated. It is by associating people more largely in the Government of the country and giving them more responsibility that the movement could be checked and overcome.

If events keep moving in the direction and at the pace they are now doing, such justification as Non Co-operation may have, will soon disappear. The achievements of our legislative bodies, local and Imperial, have been such as to fill any candid critic with amazement at the amount of good work that has been accomplished and at the willingness with which the executive have met the wishes of the representatives of the people. The press act will go, all the repressive laws of the ancient regime will go. A local Sandhurst or military college will soon be established and an earnest beginning will be made for replacing European officers by Indians in the Army. The foreign department has been thrown open to us ; the principle of the substitution of Indian for English agency in all branches of administration has been practically recognised and will receive further and more rapid developments in the near future. Turn whichever direction you please, there are unmistakable signs of the Indianisation of the Government and the machinery of administration which must culminate soon in the establishment of complete provincial autonomy and Dominion home rule. We have now almost a *defacto* system of responsible Government; from this to the *dejure* stage is a short step and sure. The British Government have little to loose by taking it and much to gain. Non Co-operation cannot be fought by a counter negative as perilous and barren as itself. The policy of subversion must be countered by substitution.

INDIA AND THE COLONIES

The problem of Indian labour in the colonies must be taken up at once for satisfactory solution. It is not possible for any Indian to read the accounts of what is happening in Kenya without a feeling of indignation. By every possible canon

of right, history, economic position, services rendered, sacrifices endured, Indians have the first claim to that colony, Uganda and the adjacent parts of Africa. A handful of white settlers, not more than a fourth of our settlers, want to lord it over them and deprive them of their rights.

One of the arguments employed by the whites is that people who do not enjoy Self Government in their own country cannot be permitted to acquire a dominant position in the colonies. Arguments of this nature are bound to act as a spur for the demand of immediate Swaraj. It is not possible for us to miss the significance of such a situation. Adventurous minds in our country are asking whether if we had been an independent nation, we could not have obtained better conditions for our kith and kin abroad. To remove certain misapprehension regarding the culture, civilisation and status of our people prevalent in the colonies it is necessary to organise an Indian consular service to be manned entirely by Indians. In every consulate, in addition to the men in charge of general supervision and trade there ought to be a doctor to report on the health conditions under which our labourers are employed. If this had been done the abominable sex conditions in Fiji would not have continued so long. These consular reports must be periodically published. As a co-ordinating agency in supreme charge of our colonial and labour interests, there ought to be organised in the Government of India a special Department under an Indian Minister. All our representatives abroad including the High Commissioner should be Indians. If Canada could have her own embassy in Washington, India should be allowed by means of the High Commissioner or special delegates to advise the foreign office in London on its Asiatic Policy.

REFORMS AND SOCIAL RE-CONSTRUCTION

To us who hold social reconstruction to be as important as political, it must be very gratifying to see the earnestness with which social problems including labour, have been taken up by the new Legislative bodies for solution. It is a tribute

to the changed atmosphere brought about by social democratic movements like ours that Dr. Gour's bill should have been approved by the Madras Council, which in the recent past did not show much appreciation of Mr. V. S. Sastri's bill to legalise Post Puberty Marriages. I expect Dr. Gour to meet with a better fate than Mr. Basu in his atttempts to promote a reform which might trace its lineage to the greatest nationalist in Indian History, Akbar. Industrial conciliation, workmen's compensation, factory legislation, and similar measures, are on the anvil. With reference to workmen's compensation the only comment that I would make is whether seeing that the vast majority of such acts have provided for compulsory insurance, the present bill, which discards it, would prove to be a success. Factory legislation must be dear to our party as when that question was first mooted, our late lamented leader Dr. Nair was almost the only Indian who pleaded for better labour conditions against the united voice of Indian Capital. The present bill does not go far enough. It is very defective and I am in general agreement with the amendments proposed by the Bomboy Social Service League. I hope that Mr. Joshi's attempt to amend the sections relating to specific performance of contracts and bringing them into line with the practice of civilised countries will not be thwarted. The cause of the non-brahmins is the cause of the masses, and the nation. We are the nation ; and every step in the democratisation of our political machinery is bound to have under our agency a beneficial reaction on social condition and progress. The elimination of racial distinctions from our criminal law and proceedure will remove a deep source of resentment while it would undoubtedly tend to a fuller security of justice. If there are legal difficulties in the way of marriages being performed without the intervention of purohits they ought to be removed. The revenues of temples and mutts must be utilised for the good of the people instead of a class; and Hindu Law in general should be purged of sacredotal and tribal elements. Mr. Seshagiri Iyer's bills can only be regarded as the commencement of this

process which has to be carried much further before the individual could be freed from his ancient bondage to tribe and priest. In the eyes of social democracy the recent political reforms have justified themselves and there can be no reason to doubt, that in the future also the two sets of reforms will advance together in happy conjunction.

DYARCHY

As mentioned above Non Co-operation will have to be met by a positive policy of political advancement and substitution of Indian for European agency. It is high time that Dyarchy should be replaced by full provincial autonomy. It was introduced as a compromise and like most compromises on principle it has not satisfied either of the parties to the bargain. It is a political paradox which requires instant resolution, no matter whether it is a success or failure. If it has been a success it must naturally lead to a fuller and more logical system; if it has been a failure it must give place to something better and autonomy is the only possible alternative. After a careful study of the work of the Provincial Councils in India I have come to the conclusion that it is an anamoly, persistance in which will do no credit to British Indian statesmanship. Under it neither the Ministers nor the Councillors enjoy the requisite freedom and power; and while these are absent, constitutional responsibility is impossible. The Coulcillors seem to feel that they are too frequently left in the air without sufficient support. The Ministers again feel that their influence is not sufficiently pervasive and with finances practically taken out of their hands they are put to the invidious task of making bricks without straw. Further, elections are not fought in the transferred subjects only. Popular leaders and candidates have to declare their views on all the problems of the day when questions outside the transferred subjects come up for discussion they find themselves in a situation of extraordinary difficulty and delicacy. In the absence of full control over their subordinates in the higher services the Ministers

can at best be only responsible advisers to the Government and not responsible executive as intended by the statute. It is a question for consideration whether under this system we have had Ministers with collective responsibility or only Ministers with individual. Owing to their illogical association with executive Councillors and the influence, I suppose, of beauracratic traditions and atmosphere, Ministers have not been able to take the lead in the Legislatures in the same way as the Cabinets in Europe do and the Legislative Councils are therefore left very much as they were formerly though with more power. As was foreseen by that shrewd observer Col. Wedgewood, dyarchy has worked better in Madras than in other provinces, for which our thanks are due in equal measures to H. E. The Governor, our Ministers, and the Legislative Council.

In several of the provinces Ministerial Government has been rather passive, taking defeats in the same way as the executive Councillors would and reducing themselves more or less to the position of a slate on which the Legislative Council could write what it pleases. For these defects and unsatisfactory features the system is to blame and not the persons. It was a cruel irony to have enthroned, as a cynic might aver, dyarchy on the toddy shop, and with a treasury depleted by the reckless raising of salaries and Ghandhism attacking one of the chief sources of our revenue, the ministerial position has been made extremely difficult. It is to the credit of our leaders and the co-operation of all members including Europeans that things are not worse than they are. But this political anomaly should not be prolonged beyond the term of the present Councils.

REFORMS IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Responsibility in the Central Government should not be withheld much longer. As a member of the League of Nations India has an international status; but its logical prerequisite, a national status, has yet to be conceded.

For the present the army, navy and the foreign department might remain untransferred. Since fiscal autonomy has already been given, European trade interests will not be any worse off under a fuller democracy. With regard to the fiscal commission all that need be said at present is that while welcoming it and applauding the wisdom of having an Indian Chairman we should insist on their being in it strong representatives of consumer's interests. The consumer's point of view should not be ignored and it is a question for serious deliberation whether moderate protection even in respect of the trades that require it would not be better than a very high tariff.

In this connection reference has to be made to an interview given by Mahathma Gandhi to the *Daily Express*; in my opinion a momentous pronouncement which opens the way for negotiations and settlement by consent. The apostle of subversion has at last shown signs of conversion to a positive policy, definite, constructive, and in full accord with the declared aims of Government. "Home Rule," says Mr. Gandhi, "of the dominion type will form a complete settlement of the present conflict." Full Home Rule in the absence of an indigenous home defence is neither possible nor desirable; that should come after the policy of substitution has made far greater progress. But I take it that these details might be amicably settled.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The reform of District Administration, on the lines proposed by Gokhale deserves immediate consideration. District autocracy and a liberal civil service in the Central and the Provincial Governments cannot be easily reconciled. Officers who have become accustomed to the exercise of despotic powers in their earlier years are not likely to prove willing colleagues of democracy later. In the Phillipines, district administration is not entrusted to a single individual but to a commission of three of whom the majority are filipinoes.

Gokhale proposed advisory councils. The democratisation of District Administration requires to be investigated.

WELCOME TO THE PRINCE OE WALES

The advent of H. R. H the Prince of Wales at such a juncture as this while the old clouds are lingering though the new dawn has broken, is an event of the best possible augury, an auspicious sign which stirs our hopes and hearts in no ordinary degree. Nothing has pained the loyal people of our country more than this discourtesy which the members of the Non Co-operation movement have resolved to show to the representative of the throne who is above all parties and who comes here as the messenger of the good will and sympathy that the Crown has never failed to display towards India since the days of Queen Victoria. The charter granted by that noble queen has been the foundation of our constitutional aspirations and progress. Our people could not forget the call for greater sympathy sounded by His Majesty the present Emperor which helped to produce in no so small measure greater cordiality between the two races in India. Every royal visit has been fruitful of added good to the country. Apart even from gratitude there is a duty that we owe to the throne from which we cannot be deflected. I have not the slightest doubt that our Prince will receive a welcome proportionate to the majesty of the soverign power he represents and the great traditions of loyalty to the throne of which we are the custodians.

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

The country will also welcome the parliamentary delegations. In the old days it was enough if the leaders of the two countries understood each other. Now that the power is passing into the hands of the people it is very necessary that the parliaments should effect a complete mutual understanding. I do not see why the Imperial Conference should always meet in London and why it should not meet in the different capitals of the Empire by turns. Should this proceedure ever come into vogue I trust that Delhi will have precedence next after London.

COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION IN THE SERVICES

I commend warmly the wisdom of the Madras legislature in passing the resolutions of Mr. Thanikachalam Chetty for securing an adequate representation of the different communities in our public services. This is one of the most important contributions to social reconstruction and if it is accepted by all parties as a just principle of distribution of public patronage, accepted sincerely, honestly and without any mental reservation, it would render possible the dawn of greater harmony and co-operation. May I on this occasion say how gratified I am that Mysore, in the service of which I spent so many years, has been taken as the model for Madras. No one conversant with our past history and the disabilities the masses had to suffer under for untold ages, would think that we have secured more than our due or even a tithe of it. It is a pity that some of the leading members of the Brahmin Community have thought fit to interpose difficulties of their invention in the way of two non-brahmin judges being appointed to the High Court. If it had been done in good faith, we should have regretted it as an unfortunate error of judgment and passed on without resentment. The circumstances however cannot permit of such a charitable inference. It is no use professing nationalist and philanthropic sentiments, paying lip service to equality, repudiating monopoly, and the rest of it, if at the very first test, action fails to be in accord with sentiments and no sign is visible of a change of heart for the better. On all accounts—and I have consulted a number of friends Brahmin as well as Non-Brahmin—this is one of the sorriest episodes in Madras public life. Such conduct is not likely to promote the best interests of the country or of themselves.

CONCLUSION

Ours is the party of national and social democracy. It is the only one of its kind. We stand for progress all round, educational, the root cure of our ills, economic, social and political. We cannot therefore afford to run in one direction

only like a horse in blinkers. We cannot afford to be bamboozled by the cry of slave mentality in politics, into accepting slave mentality in our social and religious life as the divinely ordained condition of our existence. No one who does not raise the banner of social reconstruction need expect us to flock to his standard. We are a progressive party who will keep adjusting our programme to the changing needs of the times. Having suffered so much from unalterable scriptures, we shall not write any ourselves. We stand for liberalism and humanisim in all our relations. Political order is a priceless possession for us and it would be our earnest attempt to reconcile it with the insistent demands of political progress. Substitution, not subversion, is our Motto. We have to stand between revolution on the one hand and obscurantist loyalism on the other. The difficulties of a centre party like ours with its comprehensive out-look are great. But we are strong enough to bear them; and I trust as a result of our united labours we shall make our country more united, prosperous and stronger.

So long as the putrid and perverse mentality of Varanashramism persists, openly or secretly, thus long will there be an imperative need to keep our organisation strong and our swords bright. The Englishman does not understand the inwardness and spiritual basis of the Non-Brahmin movement, and knowing his capacity to enter into the feelings and thoughts of other communities, I would strongly advise him to give up trying. We are a party formed purely for defence of our rights and not agression in any shape or form; secondly—and this is the pith and marrow of the movement—we are engaged in the humanitarian task of reclaiming our fair land and its millions from the Shastric deluge which swept through it in the days of our ignorance and darkness, when light was denied to us; or to put it differently salvaging a noble ship wrecked on the rock of superstition and sacerdotalism. This is a Reformation movement, which seeks to secure for the soul the same type and standard of freedom that in politics we claim for our country.

I do not think even we ourselves have realised fully the extent and scope of this revolt against the ancient socio-religious regime, and the root and branch reconstruction that it is destined in the fulness of time to accomplish. Exclusion of anybody or any class cannot be a permanent part of our creed. "Bahishkar" is not and has never been one of our weapons. If we had to imitate others and seize that weapon, it is only for the sake of self-preservation, for keeping the poison out of the body till we are strong enough to disgest it. We have been told that what the greatest man of India and one of the greatest in the world's history, Gautama Budda, failed to accomplish, we, the small folk of a petty age, should not dare to attempt. There is one difference between the days of that glorious prince of the Sakas and ours,—knowledge was the monopoly of the few then, it is becoming the possession of all now. Knowledge is power and nevermore will it be permitted to fall into the hands of the few, no matter to what race or what caste they belong. Oligarchy secular or religious, is not only dead but damned; and we in our small way are instruments in bringing about this destruction and the consequential redemption. As we have a spiritual basis and a spiritual message to give, we cannot become mere politicians without becoming faithless to our own highest purpose. By literature, propaganda, lectures, assemblies for the discussion of social, philosophical and religious problems, social service, social reform we should mould feeling, thought, and will on a nobler pattern. The only justification of power is service; power without service is brute force and no longer human, much less divine. Unless our party strives whole heartedly, single mindedly utilising all its resources in men and money to the full, to promote the greatest good of the greatest number, it will become sapless of moral purpose, and degenerate into a machine. It is no use sneering at Mahathma Gandhi and pointing the finger of scorn at his followers as men without a stake. The stake of the Soul cannot be measured in lands or money–human worth cannot be left to be estimated by the Survey and Settlement Department. We that boast of large

stakes and saner citizenship, let us raise funds as they have done, show ourselves as capable of sacrifice, and organise ourselves on as nation-wide a scale as they have done. Thus only could we justify our claims and save the country from the horrors of Revolution. Let us not sit quiet, self-contended. We must raise big funds and carry systematic propaganda. We must link ourselves up with similar organisations in other parts of India and make ourselves the national party that we in essence are and play our rightful part in the larger life of the country. Our brethren in the different parts of India have begun to rise. What is required is the consolidation of social democracy and I trust that in this great national task big with the redemption of humanity we of Madras as the best organised group of social democrats, will take the lead.